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Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-13 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01 RSR-01 /119 W
---------- 044761
R 24155Z AUG 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6405

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15367

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS
SUBJECT: SENATE ELECTIONS IN MR 2

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL NHA TRANG AUG 23, 1973
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.
QUOTE:
C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0792

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS
SUBJECT: SENATE ELECTIONS IN MR 2

1. OFFICIALS IN MR 2 ARE PREPARING FOR SUNDAY'S SENATE ELECTIONS AND ARE INSTITUTING TIGHT SECURITY CONTROLS PER INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY MR 2 COMMANDER, GENERAL TOAN, TO ALL PROVINCE CHIEFS AT A MEETING IN NHA TRANG ON AUGUST 20. COL LE HUU DUC, ACTING DEPUTY MR 2 COMMANDER, TOLD US THIS MORNING (AUG 23) THAT HE EXPECTS THE COMMUNISTS TO TRY TO DISRUPT THE ELECTIONS BY HARASSING WOULD-BE VOTERS, BY SETTING UP ROADBLOCKS TO PREVENT VOTERS FROM GETTING TO THE POLLS (SEE NHA TRANG'S 0775 AND 0785) AND BY STUFFING BATTLOT BOXES WITH COMMUNISTS BALLOTS. ACCORDING TO ONE INTELLIGENCE SOURCE, COMMUNISTS ARE INSTRUCTING VOTERS TO BRING BACK BALLOTS OF GVN-SPONSORED SLATES 1 AND 2, TO SHOW THE VC THAT THEY HAD NOT CAST THEM. HOWEVER, DESPITE THESE REPORTS AND THE SECURITY MEASURES BEING TAKEN, WE RECEIVED THE CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPRESSION THAT COL DUC WAS IN NO WAY ALARMED AND BELIEVED THAT EXCEPT FOR CERTAIN ISOLATED CASES, HE HAD THE SITUATION VERY MUCH IN CONTROL.

2. CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS ARE, IN GENERAL, CAMPAIGNING HARD FOR THE DEMOCRACY PARTY. IN BINH DINH, THE MOST POPULOUS PROVINCE IN MR 2, THE PROVINCE CHIEF HAS ORDERED HIS UNDERLINGS TO MUSTER 90 PERCENT OF THE VOTES CAST FOR SLATE 1 AND 85 PERCENT FOR SLATE 2. IN BINH THUAN, OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS ARE LEAVING NOTHING TO VMANCE AND ARE CAMPAIGNING ACTIVELY TO HAVE ALL VOTES CAST FOR SLATES 1 AND 2. IN NINH THUAN AND TUYEN DUC, THE DAN CHU PARTY IS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE GVN ON THE TRIUMPHAL ARCHES BEING ERECTED OVER THOROUGHFARES: THE RED STAR OF TTX PARTY SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE THREE RED STRIPES OF THE REPUBLIC.

3. ALL THIS ACTIVITY HAS YET TO EXCITE PUBLIC INTEREST. THE LARGEST CAMPAIGN RALLY WE HAVE HEARD OF -- 15,000 TO 20,000 DAN CHU "SUPPORTERS" IN BINH DINH ON AUG 20 -- WAS ORGANIZED BY AN EFFECTIVE PROVINCE MACHINE WHICH ENCOURAGED AND FACILITATED ATTENDANCE. MORE TRULY ILLUSTRATIVE OF PUBLIC INTEREST WAS THE POOR TURN-OUT AT THE MR 2 CAMPAIGN PRESENTATION OF ALL FOUR SLATES IN NHA TRANG ON AUGUST 12 (SEE NHA TRANG A-107). PUBLIC APATHY APPEARS TO PROFOUND ENOUGHT EVEN TO BLUNT ELECTORAL EXPRESSION OF THE WIDE-SPREAD DISCONTENT OVER HIGH PRICES. WE EXPECT THAT THE MASSES, PRODDED BY THEIR ADMINISTRATORS, WILL TROOP DUTIFULLY TO THE POLLS AND INDIFFERENTLY CAST THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THEIR BALLOTS FOR SLATES 1 AND 2.
COOK UNQUOTE:
MARTIN

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
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